

THE MAN WHO WAS LOST

Drawing by Frank Snapp

By MAUDE RADFORD WARREN

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS

THE hero, a strong, fine young American, awoke in a hospital in Switzerland, whither he was taken in an unconscious state after a fall down an Alpine mountainside. He was unable to recall the slightest circumstance in his life, even his name, whether he had been married, or where he came from. Through some unaccountable impulse he adopted the name Jimmy Sylvester, and related glib tales of his early life to Mrs. Beldon, a beautiful American widow who took an interest in him, that somehow appeared to him as being true. He seemed to remember vaguely that he had been in New York, and went there on the same steamer with Mrs. Beldon.

CHAPTER II. (Continued)

THE ship drew slowly into the pier, and Mrs. Beldon, beside him, gazed down into the thronging crowd, which was starting up to greet its relatives and friends. Suddenly she seized his arm excitedly.

"Oh, there they are!" she cried. "There is Aunt Clara and my angel-child."

"Where?" he asked; for she seemed to be pointing to all four points of the compass.

"There! Do you see that fat man with the pink forehead waving his hat? Well, just behind him,—the lady in brown. The chauffeur is holding up Frances Helen,—that beautiful child in white."

"Yes, I see," he said.

He could also see that Aunt Clara was gazing at him appraisingly, and as if with preconceived disapproval. He quite understood. Mrs. Beldon was a pretty and rich young widow. Aunt Clara, by her very build and air, showed that she was managing and critical. She had taken upon herself the not disagreeable duty of judging and warding off Mrs. Beldon's undesirable suitors.

When they disembarked, and little Mrs. Beldon was enfolded in her aunt's arms, with Frances Helen clasped like a necklace about her, Jimmy Sylvester felt almost as homesick as a lonely woman. He longed to get away from this and other meetings and plunge into the city; but presently Mrs. Beldon introduced him to Mrs. Chester, who scanned him with clear, handsome eyes, and plainly decided that he had not yet arrived at the line of danger. Frances Helen had a seraph face, over which, he growingly suspected, could come the sly look of the fawn. She held out her arms to him, and he lifted her up much gratified.

"I kiss all Mama's friends," she said, upon which he put her down.

"Now you see why I call her my devil-child," said Mrs. Beldon.

Frances Helen held out her arms again. "But I will kiss that bad place on your cheek and make it well, because I am sorry your face is hurted," she said.

"Now I see why you call her an angel-child," said Jimmy Sylvester, picking up the elf again.

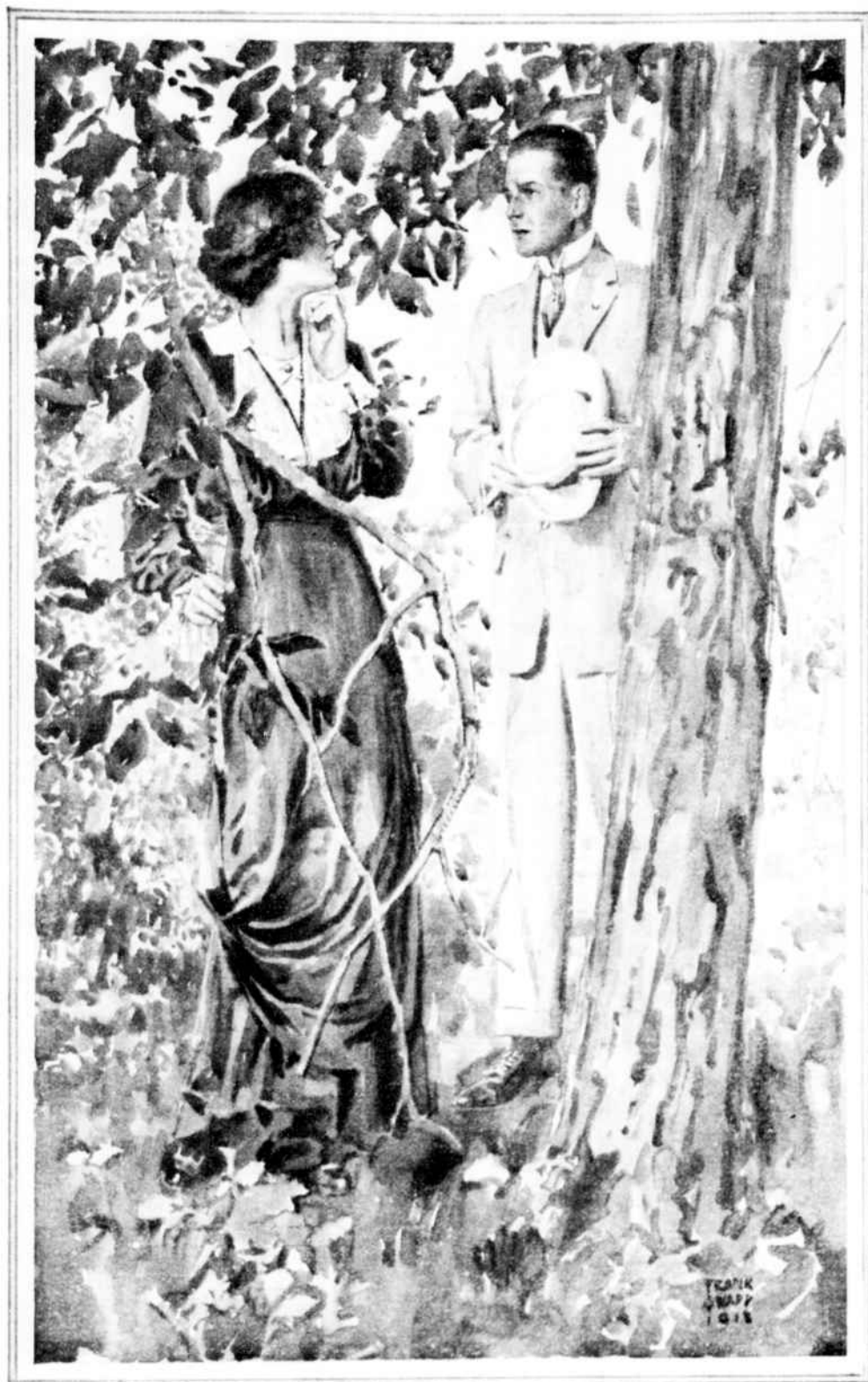
HE helped Mrs. Beldon with her trunks, and, refusing an offer to be set down somewhere, and promising to call on her soon, he turned off the long pier and walked into the city, with a pleasant sense of freedom. He took a 234-st. car and tried to be unconscious of himself, hoping that his feet would lead him unawares to his old haunts. But by the time he had reached Broadway he felt uncertain. Probably he had made himself too self-conscious. He knew the street well, he could visualize dozens of other streets; but when he tried to put himself into relation with them he failed. He went to a pleasant little hotel on Washington Square. It seemed familiar enough to him as he entered; but he could not tell whether he had ever lived there or not. Presently he decided that he had not, for the bellboys, the clerks, and the telephone operator all looked at him without recognition; so he wrote his name in the register. That night he dined out, in a well known restaurant, not too fashionable.

He knew very well what he wanted. He wanted to be sitting at some table, perhaps well through the entrance; the door would open, and a lively party of young men and women would enter. Then someone would catch sight of him and cry:

"Hello! There's Jimmy! When did you get back, Jimmy?"

Then they would all rush forward and seize his hands, and he would remember everything and call them all by name.

But nothing of the sort happened. Night after night he dined and lunched and supped in the restaurants of New York. Sometimes he chose the very fashionable ones, where the rich and beautiful came for food. Sometimes he chose those of the middle class sort, where business men go for expertly cooked and served luncheons. Occasionally he went to the cheap table d'hôte places. But nowhere was he spoken to; nowhere did the faintest gleam of recognition greet him. He decided drearily



Looked at Him with That Frozen Gaze of Fear.

that probably he knew New York only as the tourist knows it, and that his real life and work lay somewhere else. He felt very much alone and alien, as if somehow he was an impostor, and was taking up cubic space in the world to which he had no moral right.

HE had been in America a week before anything happened to him. Sick of the crowds in the city, no one human being of which claimed him, he went out into the country for a long tramp. At last, in the late afternoon, he entered a stretch of woods not far from a roadhouse of the more exclusive sort. He sat down on a log and began to take stock of himself and his money. It was high time he abandoned his search for a personality and began a search for work. He could get on without a real name; but as long as he had a body he could not get along without eating. As he sat there, ruminating, storm clouds began to gather. He watched them indifferently, looking up through the tall trees. In some way the scene reminded him of the story he had told Mrs. Beldon, of the time when the schoolboy Jimmy Sylvester had broken his arm. A slow drop or two fell, and he pulled his cap over his eyes and rose. As he did so, he heard the sound of light running steps, followed by heavier running steps. Then he heard a panting cry, and a woman's voice called brokenly:

"Let me go, Mr. Wallace! Let me go, I say!"

Jimmy Sylvester took a step forward, and even as he did so he was inwardly commenting on the beauty of

the voice. For all its startled intonations, it was as sweet as a bell, a little rich and throaty in timbre, and infinitely appealing.

Jimmy Sylvester quickened his steps, and coming out from behind a thick screen of trees he saw a slight girl in black struggling with a thick-set, pink-faced young man, who was plainly drunk. In a moment Sylvester was aware that he had a violent temper. He rushed toward the man, and, forgetting of the broken arm, tore him away from the girl and sent him spinning against the rough trunk of a tree. If the fellow had been fully in his senses, he would doubtless have hit back; as it was, he fell to the ground, struck his cheek against a lot of glass some panicker had left, and lay bleeding and half dazed.

The girl, once she was freed, had not even looked up at her protector. She ran on, stumbling through the woods, aware from the roadhouse:

"She mustn't do that," thought Jimmy. "It's begun to rain hard, and she ought to get under shelter."

He ran after her and overtook her just when she had reached a sudden fence, and was standing staring about helplessly.

The moment he looked at her, Jimmy Sylvester felt a singing joy that he was alive. It was not that she was so singularly beautiful, though her face was lovely; it was because she was she. She was very dark, with soft hair that seemed very deep as it fell back from her forehead with the curve of a dove's wings, and yet